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tion of Cabul and Peshawur. Col. Prejevalsky will shortly set out on his new exploring expedition to Kuldja, Thibet and the Himalayas.

The last supplement to *Petermann's Mittheilungen* is devoted to an elaborate monograph by Dr. G. A. Credner, of Halle University, upon deltas. The paper is divided into two sections. In the first he treats of the limits of deltas, their character, and formation of their surface, their size, power, material, rate and results of growth, their age, number and geographical distribution and classification. In the second he treats of the origin and causes of the formation of deltas, and the geological problem thus presented. Maps showing the various deltas and illustrating the upheaval and subsidence of land are also given.

The British Arctic exploring ship *Alert* has again been put into commission under her old captain, Sir George Nares, for surveying service in Magellan's straits and the south Pacific. The work in Magellan's straits is expected to occupy from one to two years. The *Alert* will then proceed to make isolated but important surveys in the neighborhood of the Society, Friendly and Fiji islands and of shoals and reefs between the Fijis and New Zealand, and finally on the south-western and north-western coasts of Australia.

Major Herbert Wood and other writers have heretofore confidently asserted that the ancient river Oxus (now the Amu Darya) has within historic times emptied into the Caspian sea, and that its ancient channel can still be traced. The recent breaking down of a dam at Fort Bend on the Amu, which has caused a deviation of its waters in the direction of this old bed, has originated the report mentioned in the London *Times* that the river was about to resume its former course. Prof. Kiepert now writes to the Berlin *National Zeitung* to deny this report. He asserts that the old bed of the Oxus belongs to geology and not to history and that the project of completely restoring the ancient water-course and opening a new water way from Moscow to the heart of Asia is one which would overtask the resources of the richest state.

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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— In December, 1878, Dr. Gustav Leonhard, of Heidelberg, died, leaving the editorial management of the Jahrbuch für Mineralogie, so long and favorably know in America, in the hands of Dr. Hans Bruno Geinitz, of Dresden. Now, after sixteen years association with Dr. Leonhard, Dr. Geinitz retires from the editorship. The dissolution of this distinguished partnership will create a new feature in geological literature, and we can only wish Dr. Geinitz the same success in the cultivation of his favorite science in the future that he has had in the past.

— We regret to learn that in the great press of business which occupied the last hours of the late National Congress, the amendment to the Legislative, etc., Appropriation Bill, abolishing the existing Geological Surveys of the Territories, was passed. The fact that this measure had been defeated in the Committee on the Whole, and also in the House by votes of two to one, did not prevent its passage in consequence of a transfer at the last moment to the Sundry Civil Bill. A large number of scientific men will now have opportunity to repent at leisure their apathy in having allowed the substitution of one organization in place of three or four, which will, in all probability, not receive from Congress even the third of the aid which the surveys have been accustomed to obtain. The only remedy is to give the direction of the new Bureau to the man who has shown himself most influential in impressing Congress with the importance of making large appropriations for scientific work. The plausible plea that the geological surveys have been misused for the prosecution of zoölogical and other work, however it may affect the Executive, will not receive much sympathy from men of science. It is not true that a generous sympathy with all branches of science unfits a man for the directorship of a scientific survey.

— With much regret we have to announce the death of the distinguished palæontologist and comparative anatomist, Paul Gervais, which took place on February the 10th, in Paris. Prof. Gervais was born at Paris, on September 26, 1816. After taking the degree of doctor in science and medicine, he served as one of the aide-naturalistes of the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle. In 1841 he became professor of zoölogy to the Faculté des Sciences of Montpellier; and on the death of Gratiolet, in 1865, he was appointed to the vacant professorial chair at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, which he filled till his death. M. Gervais' powers and industry are attested by the value and number of his scientific papers, which in 1873 amounted to a hundred and sixty-four in number. In these he touched on almost every group of the animal kingdom; but his principal attention was directed to the higher classes, especially to the mammalia, recent and extinct. Of his separate works the most generally known are his Zoologie et Palèontologie Françaises, Zoologie et Palèontologie générales, Ostéographie des Monotrèmes, and (in collaboration with Prof. P. van Beneden) his Ostéographie des Cétacés; both of the last-named works are unfortunately left unfinished. He was principal editor of the Journal de Zoölogie.

In 1873 M. Gervais was elected a member of the Académie des Sciences, and he was a foreign member of the geological and zoölogical societies of London.

Prof. Gervais was one of the few living authorities on the palæontology of the Vertebrata, and was engaged at the time of his death on a work on the minute structure of the bone of the various groups of Vertebrata. He leaves a son who is an able anatomist.

— The Geological Society of London has awarded to Prof. E. D. Cope the Bigsby Gold Medal in recognition of his services to palæontology.

— It appears that the Legislature of Pennsylvania is in some danger of failing to make appropriation for the continuation of the Geological Survey. We very much regret the existence of such a possibility, and hope that our legislators will carefully consider the interests of their constituents in this matter. Nothing is more valuable to a commonwealth than an inventory of its actual possessions, with a knowledge of their distribution and the methods of making them available. A knowledge of the physical constitution of a region is also an essential in the educational system of its inhabitants. Neither of these ends can be accomplished without the Geological Survey made by experts in the science, and no class of public servants produces more valuable work for less money than they. By all means continue the survey.

— We have received the first number of the Guide du Naturaliste. Revue bibliographique des Sciences Naturelles, Bulletin mensuel. Par A. Bouvier. Paris, 1879. (Un franc le numéro.) This is a valuable and newsy monthly, giving full details of contents of the journals and proceedings of the scientific societies of France, with courses of lectures in botany, zoölogy and geology.

— An elaborate and fully illustrated essay, by Dr. Hermann Müller, on the Cross-fertilization of plants, extracted from Schenk's Handbuch der Botanik, has been received too late for careful review.

— Early in January about five million young codfish were turned into the sea by the assistants of the United States Fish Commissions stationed at Gloucester, Mass.

— At the annual meeting of the California Academy of Sciences, held Monday, Jan. 6th, the following officers for 1879 were elected: President, George Davidson; corresponding secretary, S. B. Christy; director of museum, W. G. W. Harford.

— The Marquess of Tweedale, better known as Viscount Walden, President of the Zoölogical Society of London, died Dec. 29th, 1878. He was an active ornithologist, paying especial attention to the birds of the East Indies.

— Victor Ghiliani, one of the founders of the Italian Entomological Society, died in May last at Turin. Dr. Wilhelm Engelmann, the eminent German publisher of scientific books died at Leipzig, December 23.

— Congress has passed a bill appropriating $250,000 for a fire-proof National Museum, adjoining the Smithsonian Institution.

— According to *Nature*, the widow of the late Prof. Eichwald has presented the remarkable palæontological collections of her husband to the St. Petersburg University. The collection contains upwards of 30,000 specimens of fossils, from the various formations of Western Europe, from the Petchora Land, from the Aleutians islands, Siberia, Crimea, etc.

— Vögelbilder aus fernen Zonen, is the title of an atlas of foreign birds, just published by Fischer, of Cassel, under the care of Dr. Ant. Reichenow. It is noticed favorably by *Nature*.

— Fresh attention is drawn to the study of microscopic organisms by the appearance of part one, of the third volume of Stein's great work on Infusoria; as well as by a translation of Bütschli's essay on the Flagellate Infusoria (referring to H. James Clark's work done on American forms), and also by H. B. Brady's descriptions of deep sea Rhizopods in the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science*.

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PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

New York Academy of Sciences, Dec. 9, 1878.—Prof. Henry Wurtz exhibited a large series of the minerals from the Silver Islet, Lake Superior, and described under the name of Huntilite (in honor of Prof. T. Sterry Hunt), a new species of silver ore from that locality. Huntilite occurs both massive and minutely crystallized, and is essentially an arsenide of silver, occupying the gap in mineralogy between dyscrasite and domeykite; dyad metals, especially nickel, appear to have replaced some part of the silver, and antimony a small part of the arsenic. Prof. Wurtz gave minute and laborious analyses and many interesting details.

Dec. 23d.—Mr. A. A. Julian made a communication on the glacial excavation of the Kaaterskill Clove. Mr. B. B. Chamberlin exhibited a series of minerals from the zinc and lead mines of Wisconsin.

Jan. 6, 1879.—Dr. Ephraim Cutter addressed the Academy on Tolles' one-seventy-fifth-inch objective—its history, construction and use (with sciopticon illustrations).

Jan. 13.—Prof. Henry Wurtz presented before the Chemical Section, further particulars of his new mineral, Huntilite, from the Silver Isles of Lake Superior.

Jan. 20th.—Mr. S. W. Ford read a paper on the structure and development of certain primordial trilobites. Mr. A. A. Julian remarked on the conglomerate from the sand-beds of Southeastern New Jersey. Dr. R. P. Stevens made a communication on the glacial moraine at Jamaica, Long Island.

Jan. 27th.—At a meeting of the section of Biology Dr. Charles